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Date deposited: 10th September 2013

Version of chapter: Author final



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The Civic University: Connecting the Global and the Local

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(in Capello,R., Olechnick,A, and Gorzelak,G. (eds) (2012) *Universities, Cities and Regions : Loci for knowledge and innovation creation*. London, Routledge

INTRODUCTION

The contemporary meaning of being ‘an urban university rather than just a university built in a city’ (Goodall, 1970: 48) is ambiguous. Is the university *in* the city or part *of* the city? This is a question often asked by policy makers. In this chapter we make the case for the civic university working with others in the leadership of the city in order to ensure that its universities are both globally competitive and locally engaged.

The ambiguity about the university and the city is reflected in the existence of two separate knowledge communities. The first backs into the university from a city and regional development perspective and the second backs into the city from a focus on the university as an institution. Each of these has its own ‘community of practice’ linked to the knowledge base and enshrined in two separate domains of government – higher education and territorial development. From an urban and regional policy perspective the university is sometimes seen as providing the answer to all manner of urban ills, from a shortage of jobs through to the inclusion of marginalised communities into the socio-economic mainstream. From a higher education policy perspective engagement with a city can provide an outward and visible sign of the

university's contribution to civil society. But there are potential tensions here between internationally acknowledged academic excellence and societal accessibility to knowledge that urban engagement implies (Calhoun, 2006).

We suggest here that the concept of the civic university can provide a bridge between the internal and external drivers on higher education. However building this bridge poses leadership challenges, both within the city and within the university, and between the two. We illustrate these challenges with reference to experience in the UK and the US, our own large scale survey of how academics in six universities in three English cities view the impact of their own research, and the design of a universities and civic leadership development programme based on interviews with key actors in these cities.

THE CIVIC UNIVERSITY IN THE UK AND THE LAND GRANT UNIVERSITY IN THE US

Both the UK and the US have long established institutions that historically combine academic excellence and public service. Many of the UK's great universities were created in the 19th century to meet the needs of growing manufacturing cities. Local entrepreneurs responded to the needs for scientific knowledge and a healthy and skilled work force by funding universities. During the second half of the 20th century, central government increased control of higher education through public funding, cities de-industrialised, and many of these earlier foundations turned their backs on the cities in which they were based. Increased public funding for research followed narrowly defined academic criteria and higher education was rolled out across the

nation to fill in the map of teaching and learning with a diverse set of institutions. Now nearly all UK cities have one or more universities.

Elsewhere we have argued that now is the time to re-invent the notion of the broadly based civic university that served the UK so well in the 19th century, but now set in the context of a more globalised economy and society (Goddard 2009). We suggest that such a university should:

- Provide opportunities for the society of which it is part (individual learners, businesses, public institutions).
- Engage as a whole not piecemeal with its surroundings.
- Partner with other local universities and colleges.
- Be managed in a way that facilitates institutional wide engagement with the city and region of which it forms part.
- Operate on a global scale but use its location to form its identity.

The following statements made by the Vice Chancellors of Birmingham and Newcastle Universities, two of the UK's great 'civic' institutions, demonstrate this desire to 'reconnect' with their local roots.

The vision of the founders of much of our higher education system, who sought to create institutions to enable 'the advancement of learning and ennoblement of life', still provides us with a significant challenge today. These are aspirations which are enshrined in the charters of universities in many of our towns and cities and provide us with a benchmark for assessing the extent to which today's institutions match these ideals. These founders were particularly interested in universities' civilising influence

and how they could boost economies and transform people within their communities and beyond.

(Eastwood, 2009: 3)

The combination of being globally competitive and regionally rooted underpins Newcastle University's vision for the future. We see ourselves not only as doing high-quality academic work ... but also as choosing to work in areas responsive to large-scale societal needs and demands, particularly those manifested in our own city and region.

(Newcastle University, 2009: 5)

In pursuit of its mission to be a 'World Class Civic University', Newcastle University is seeking to mobilise its intellectual resources around a number of grand societal challenge themes which have global and local resonance. In partnership with the City it has established the Newcastle Institute for Research on Sustainability which aims 'to bring people together throughout the university and the wider community to develop sustainable responses to the great challenge of our age: ensuring everyone has access to a fair share of the world's resources in perpetuity'. Key themes are: urban living; low carbon energy and transport; food security; water management and clean manufacturing. Another challenge theme is that of an ageing population. The University's Institute for Ageing and Health brings together basic, clinical, social and computer scientists to address: how and why we age; the treatment of age associated diseases and disabilities; the support of through-life health, well-being and independence. It uses research, training, public engagement and commercialisation to fulfil its mission.

While Newcastle University badges itself as a 'World Class Civic University', University College London sees itself as 'London's Global University'. Its Provost has identified four grand societal challenge themes that the University will address – sustainable cities, human wellbeing, global health and inter-cultural interactions. These are informed by UCL's

commitment to contribute to ‘The Wisdom Agenda’ defined as ‘the application of knowledge for the good of humanity’. In each of these cases it is clear that the universities are moving beyond research for its own sake and beginning to address the public value issues that should underpin such endeavours.

Notwithstanding differences in scale, a similar narrative of local engagement, disengagement and re-engagement exists with respect to American land-grant universities. These were established under the principles laid down in the Morrill Act of 1862 which enabled the creation of universities to serve the agricultural and subsequently industrial development needs of individual states. But as in the UK during the latter part of the 20th century, many land-grant universities lost sight of their roots in the quest for academic status. Thus the president of Arizona State University, Michael Crow, has noted:

Institutional inertia is nowhere more evident than in the academic valorization of increasingly specialised knowledge. In our effort to produce abstract knowledge without regard for its impact, many universities have lost sight of the fact that they are also institutions with the capacity to create products and processes and ideas with entrepreneurial potential. ... Through some strange elitist logic, the concept of entrepreneurship has been eradicated from institutions of higher education in this nation.

(Crow, 2008: 16)

In a similar vein the senior vice president of Oklahoma State University Robert Sternberg has written:

Land-grant institutions, contrary to some popular beliefs, are not merely about agricultural development, but rather, about changing the world in a positive, meaningful

and enduring way. ... What is important in a land-grant institution is developing future ethical leaders who will enrich their communities and their societies ... these institutions are about admitting people who will make the difference to the state and the society.

(Sternberg, 2010)

Sternberg contrasts the land-grant universities to the elite institution where there is a:

kind of curious disconnection between the university and society. In a land-grant institution traditional scholarly endeavour still matters, but work that gives back to society receives especial plaudits. It thus becomes easier for state legislatures and the people of a state to see why research is important to them, not merely to the advancement of individual researchers' scholarly careers.

(Sternberg, 2010).

These views of institutional leaders are reflected in the pronouncements of representative bodies such as The Association of Public and Land-grant Universities (A-P-L-U) whose Kellogg Commission report on the future of these institutions is entitled *Returning to our Roots: The Engaged Institution*. The Commission argues that the engaged institution must accomplish at least three things:

1. It must be organized to respond to the needs of today's students and tomorrow's, not yesterday's.
2. It must enrich student's experiences by bringing research and engagement into the curriculum and offering practical opportunities for students to prepare for the world they will enter.

3. It must put its critical resources (knowledge and expertise) to work on the problems the communities it serves face.

(Kellogg Commission on the Future of State and Land-Grant Universities, 1999: 10).

The Association's Council on Engagement and Outreach argues that the publicly engaged institution should be fully committed to direct, two-way interactions with communities and other external constituencies through the development, exchange, and application of knowledge, information and expertise for mutual benefit. This has been expressed by the A-P-L-U as 'Stepping Forward as the Stewards of Place'. The dimensions of this 'stewardship' are defined and described in Box 1:

Place-Related. While the demands of the economy and society have forced institutions to be nationally and globally aware, the fact remains that state colleges and universities are inextricably linked with the communities and regions in which they are located. Exercising "stewardship of place" does not mean limiting the institution's worldview; rather, it means pursuing that worldview in a way that has meaning to the institution's neighbours, who can be its most consistent and reliable advocates.

Interactive. The etymology of the word "engage" speaks to the intertwining or meshing of entities. In this context, engagement refers to a spirit of give and take by the university and its partners. For institutions, this means occupying the role of learner as well as teacher. For community and regional partners, this means looking to the university as a resource, not necessarily as "the answer."

Mutually Beneficial. Engagement should inure to the benefit of both parties involved. These initiatives should expand the learning and discovery functions of the institutions

while enhancing community capacity to address and resolve the issues they confront.

The work of the engaged institution is to be responsive to public needs in ways that are appropriate to the institution's mission and academic strengths. Engagement initiatives should also build greater public understanding of and support for the role of the campus as a knowledge asset and resource.

Integrated. At a campus level, engagement must permeate all levels of the institution, and be integrated into its policies, incentive structures, and priorities. At a departmental level, engagement cuts across the imperatives of teaching and scholarship to bring unparalleled opportunities for the entire campus community— faculty, staff, and students.

Source: AASCU (2002: 9)

Goddard (2009: 32-34) argues that Michigan State University, the first Land Grant University to be established, exemplifies many of these principles. Here, the University Office of Outreach and Engagement is the central resource dedicated to developing connections and partnerships with external audiences. Often, this is helping staff to develop collaborative community-based applied research and evaluation, or providing technical assistance and consulting. Many staff are supported to extend their teaching to engage with non-traditional students at off-campus sites or by technology-delivered distance education, in many forms of continuing professional development. Lots of academics provide clinical services. Many teachers use community based learning experiences as part of their courses. Others have developed and managed learning environments and exhibitions. Currently, MSU has around 70 community based projects and has 170 partnerships in more than 50 countries. It also collaborates with two other regional universities in a research corridor. There are outreach and engagement projects in many civic areas: research and practical initiatives in urban regeneration and re-designing communities;

cleaning polluted groundwater with schools; developing literacy; meeting the nursing shortage and helping to rebuild Rwanda. The Office also plays a central role in regional economic partnerships, such as Leap Inc, providing companies with easy access to the range of Michigan's capital, locations, people, university and industry partnerships, in tandem with services to accelerate business opportunities/development. This helps diversify the regional economy, attract investment and create jobs.

RE-UNITING THE CITY AND THE UNIVERSITY: THE TERRITORIAL DEVELOPMENT DRIVERS AND BARRIERS

From a policy perspective OECD has argued that reuniting cities and regions with their universities requires a better understanding of the drivers and barriers to engagement operating in each domain (OECD 2007; Goddard and Puukka 2008). In the academic literature, universities have come into play in the context of a discourse centred on building knowledge economies at the local level (Harloe and Perry, 2004; Harding *et al.*, 2007; Goddard and Vallance, 2010). Knowledge that originates from universities and 'spills over' to nearby firms is seen as a key factor in the development of urban or regional clusters in high-technology sectors (Cooke, 2002). Within both academic and policy circles, attention has shifted to supporting the institutional base of a territory that can support collective learning and innovation in the economy as a whole (Lundvall, 1992; Storper, 1997; Cooke and Morgan, 1998). This focus has been reinforced by the strengthening of a parallel policy discourse around the notion that cities and regions themselves compete with each other as relatively coherent economic units (Begg, 1999; Sheppard, 2000; Bristow, 2005), and that the basis of this competitiveness in advanced economies is increasingly related to the capacity of supporting ongoing innovation (Amin, 1999). So, in practical terms, many city and regional development authorities are looking to

universities to act as global gateways for attracting inward investment, to generate new business via spin-outs, to act as a source of advice for established businesses and to enhance human capital through graduate retention and professional updating of employees; in short they are going beyond considering universities just as major businesses and anchor institutions in local economies (European Commission, 2011). However there are barriers to realising this potential. These include: the fact that national higher education policy is of a rule 'spatially blind' and not within the domain of often fragmented local governments; the limited absorptive capacity of local businesses, especially SMEs; how the economic development function of universities is funded especially when the impact arise in areas not directly linked to the core functions of teaching and research, and last but not least, the limited capacity of institutional leaders to reward and manage this activity.

The potential contribution of universities to city or regional development is, however, not limited to this economic development sphere, but may also encompass their role in other societal areas such as public health, sustainable development, and arts and culture (Goddard and Vallance, *forthcoming*). These forms of contribution have not yet been discussed in as much detail within the regional development literature (Goddard *et al.*, 2011), but a wider possible context for this exists through recent arguments that local innovation is not just economic or technology based, but may also be social in nature. The concept of 'social innovation' in the urban and regional development literature is focused on the problems of social exclusion in specific geographical contexts, and the 'innovation' in question largely takes the form of the development of new forms of community-based social relation and organisation from within the sphere of civil society (as opposed to the market or the state) (see Moulaert and Mehmood, 2011).

The notion of social innovation is, however, beginning to develop a wider currency in policy circles, albeit typically with a much looser and non-territorial definition. For instance, in European policy terms it is linked to the idea of ‘Smart, Sustainable and Inclusive Growth’.

According to the Board of European Policy Advisors:

Social innovations are innovations that social in both their ends and their means. Specifically, we define social innovations as new ideas (products, services and models) that simultaneously meet social needs (more effectively than alternatives) and create new social relationships or collaborations. They are innovations that are not only good for society but also enhance society’s capacity to act. The *process of social interactions* between individuals undertaken to reach certain outcomes is participative, involves a number of actors and stakeholders who have a vested interest in solving a social problem, and empowers the beneficiaries.

(BEPA, 2001: 9-10; emphasis in original).

As we have pointed out elsewhere, the social dimension of university engagement with the city is less well conceptualised than its involvement with economic development (Goddard *et al.*, 2011). However, Hazelkorn (2010) argues that the concept of social innovation opens up a way of thinking about the engaged civic university. She suggests that:

rather than seeing [the university contribution to] innovation as purely a discovery process that is commercialized, it is viewed as a complex iterative process involving an array of stakeholders and (end) users - from the private/public sector and/or wider civil society- coupled with feedback loops and market linkages.

(Hazelkorn, 2010: 74).

This points to the need to move beyond the ‘triple helix’ model of business / university / government relations to a ‘quadruple helix’ which embraces civil society actors. According to Arnkil *et al.* (2010):

the quadruple helix, with its emphasis on broad cooperation in innovation, represents a shift towards systemic, open and user-centric innovation policy. An era of linear, top-down, expert driven development, production and services is giving way to different forms and levels of co-production with consumers, customers and citizens.

(Arnkil, *et al.*, 2010: 6).

So according to Hazelkorn universities need to be involved in the establishment of ‘Think & Do’ fora which:

bring together actors from civil society, the state and state agencies, and higher education to mobilize and harness knowledge, talent and investment in order to address a diverse range of problems and need through co-ordinated action. ... [S]ustained, embedded and reciprocal engagement is defined as learning beyond the campus walls, discovery which is useful beyond the academic community and service that directly benefits the public.

(Hazelkorn, 2010: 69)

RE-UNITING THE UNIVERSITY AND THE CITY: HIGHER EDUCATION DRIVERS AND BARRIERS

Recent thinking on the university as an institution in civil society have suggested that there is scope to move this broader civic role more centrally to its mission and identity (Goddard, 2009). For instance, in his 2001 book entitled *Challenging Knowledge: The University and the Knowledge Society*, Delanty argues that widely discussed collaborative notions of knowledge production (e.g. Gibbons *et al.*, 1994) are overly based on a ‘client model of the user’ (Delanty, 2001: 102), and that these societal transformations present opportunities for universities to engage a broader constituency of civil society in the knowledge production process (also see Nowotny *et al.*, 2001). He suggests that:

The crucial issue ... [is] whether the embracing of the user will allow technological innovation to be shaped by the demands of citizenship. For this to be possible, the university will have to be a forum for users drawn from not only industry but from other domains in society. The university is the institution in society most capable of linking the requirements of industry, technology and market forces with the demands of citizenship. Given the enormous dependence of these forces on university based experts, the university is in fact in a position of strength, not of weakness. While it is true that the new production of knowledge is dominated by the instrumentalisation of knowledge and that as a result the traditional role of the university has been undermined, it is now in a position to serve social goals more fully than previously when other goals were more prominent.

(Delanty, 2001: 113).

Against the largely optimistic view of the opportunities for civic engagement, there are equally institutional and cultural barriers within higher education systems that can prevent universities from being oriented towards these social goals, especially as they pertain specifically to local development. Calhoun (2006) outlines these issues in reference to major structural tensions that universities in advanced economies now face. He argues that recent transformations have

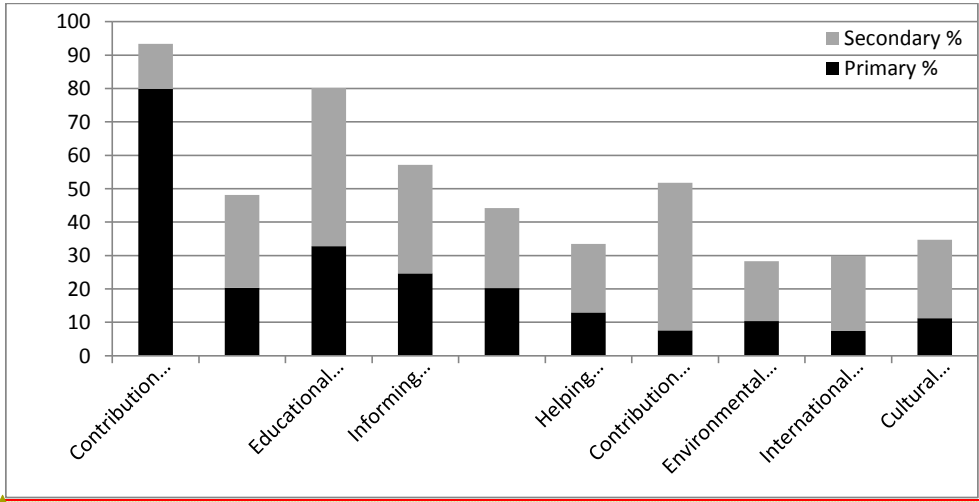
pushed universities to a point where they struggle to accommodate their diverging institutional responsibilities of producing knowledge that is ‘both applicable in deterministic ways and valuable for informing personal and public choice’, whilst also maintaining both excellence (associated with exclusivity and the specialisation of research) and public accessibility in the production and dissemination of this knowledge (Calhoun, 2006: 18-19). He argues the current situation is one in which the balance is too much in favour of the ‘excellence’ side of the dichotomy with accessibility, primarily because ‘research and the rewards for research are deeply tied up with the production of an academic hierarchy – not just with the advance of knowledge for all’ (Calhoun, 2006: 31).

THE PROMISE AND THE PRACTICE – WHAT MOTIVATES ACADEMICS?

How do these tensions play out in terms of the actual behaviour of academics? In the summer of 2010 we undertook an online questionnaire survey that explored the ways in which academics across different institutions and disciplines understand their research to have an ‘impact’ in the broadest possible sense (see Vallance *et al.*, 2011). Our aim was to contribute to a better understanding of the range of both academic and non-academic impacts that result from different forms of research and their possible relationships to activities such as teaching, consultancy, professional practice, commercialisation and public engagement, and thereby set societal impact in the context of the total activity of academics and the environments in which they work. Invitations to participate in the survey were sent to a random sample of one third of all academic staff (including research staff) from the six universities in three large English cities - Bristol, Newcastle upon Tyne, and Sheffield. In total 711 responses were received.

Questions posed in the first half of the survey enquired about the broad areas in which participants thought their research was having an impact, the groups or organisations that are beneficiaries of the research, and the mechanisms they use to deliver these research impacts. For these three questions, we introduced a distinction between ‘primary’ and ‘secondary’ research impacts or beneficiaries to differentiate between the more and less direct ways in which research can have an impact. This distinction was defined for participants in the survey as such: ‘by a primary impact or beneficiary we mean the main areas of groups for which your research is designed to directly and intentionally result in benefits. By a secondary impact or beneficiary we mean the other areas or groups that your research may indirectly benefit, even if this impact is not one of the main aims of the research’.

Figures 1 and 2 give the responses to the areas of research impact and beneficiaries of research impact questions by the levels of all participants who responded that the given categories were either a primary or secondary area/beneficiary of their research. The other response options in the questions were ‘no impact’ and ‘not applicable to me’.



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Figure 1 - In which of the following areas do you think your research is having either a primary or secondary impact? – Overall (n=711).

[Insert Figure 1 here]

As Figure 1 shows, the majority of respondents saw ‘contribution to scientific/academic knowledge or method’ as the primary impact of their research. While impact on ‘education and the development of people’ (related to teaching) was the next most commonly identified impact of research, it is interesting to note that the majority of academics who identified this impact saw it as secondary. While almost a quarter of all respondents believed their work to have a direct impact on ‘informing public policy’, fewer (20% or less in each case) felt their work impacts directly on the other socio-economic issues. However if we consider the intended secondary impacts of their research, significant numbers of respondents do mention ‘public good’ activities such as informing public policy, contributing to health and well being, environmental sustainability and cultural enrichment and helping the socially excluded, while over 40% saw contributing to the economy as an area where their research had an indirect impact. In many areas this secondary impact outweighed the permitted category of ‘no impact’

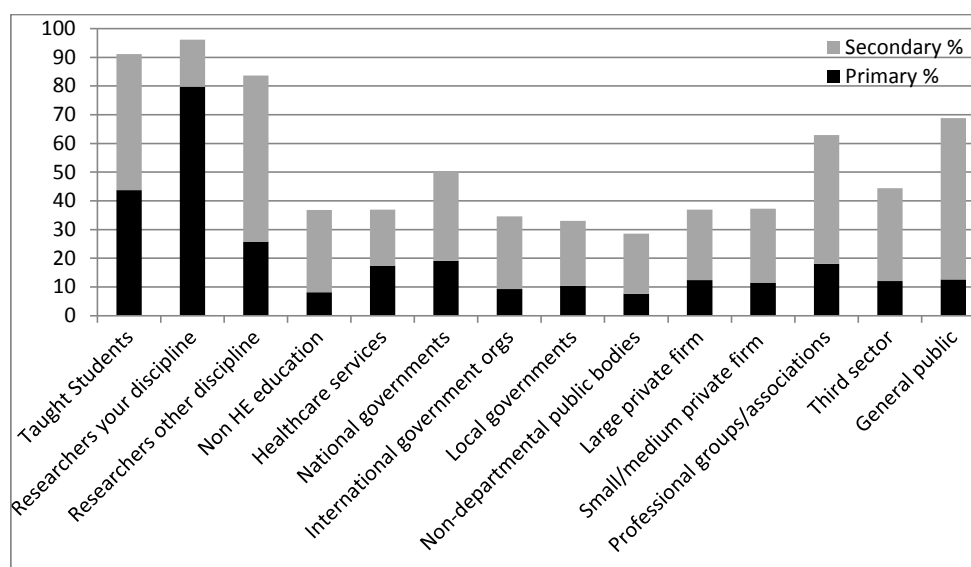


Figure 2 - Which of the following types of group or organisation do you think are either primary or secondary beneficiaries of your research? – Overall (n=711).

With these points in mind it is not surprising that the majority of respondents identified their fellow academics as the primary beneficiaries of their research (Figure 2). Students were the next biggest beneficiary group, with almost all respondents seeing them as primary or secondary beneficiaries. Again, less than 20% saw categories relating to the non-academic world (government – local and national, firms – large and small, the third sector and the general public) as primary beneficiaries of their research. For both of these questions, however, this level is much higher in some categories in the response from different academic disciplines (e.g. the medical sciences for health related categories, engineering for economic related categories, the social sciences for government related categories) (see Vallance *et al.*, 2011). However when we consider groups where the secondary impacts of academics' research might arise, then a number of 'publics' have a significantly greater score including national and local government, international government organisations, the health care sector, the professions and last but not least the general public

The second half of the survey consisted of questions about the personal, institutional, and wider environmental factors that encouraged or supported participants' research and its intended impact, and the factors that they had experienced as barriers to their research and its intended impact. Table 1 gives the response for all participants to the first of these questions, which asked them to rate the importance of the given factors in motivating their research and its intended impacts.

Personal factors motivating research and intended impacts	High %	Moderate %	Low %	No %	Skipped %
Making a contribution to scientific/academic knowledge	86.9	10.4	1.1	0.7	0.8
It supports your teaching	26.4	42.3	21.9	7.7	1.5
Your intellectual curiosity or personal interest in the subject	86.9	10.7	0.7	0.1	1.5
Advancement of your career	36.1	45.1	14.3	2.5	1.8
Your political or ethical beliefs and values	30.7	31.5	18	17.7	2.1
Boosting status of your department/school/research centre or institute	30.5	48.7	16.3	2.8	1.7
The public benefits (social, economic, or other) for the home city or region of your university	26.2	34.2	24.9	13.4	1.4
The public benefits (social, economic, or other) nationally or internationally	44	32.3	14.2	7.6	1.8

Table 1 – How important are the following factors in personally motivating your research and its intended impacts? – Overall (n=711).

The vast majority saw making a contribution to knowledge and their own intellectual curiosity or interest as the greatest motivators (almost 87% ranking both as ‘high importance’). Far fewer were motivated by ambitions of advancement or enhancing status, whether their own career or that of a wider organisation, with less than 40% of respondents ranking these as highly motivating. In terms of being motivated by the public (i.e. non-academic) benefits of their work, national or international impacts were considerably more motivating than local or regional. Almost 40% saw the latter as being of little or no motivation, while more than 40% were motivated by the potential for national or international impacts. Nevertheless the public good aspects of research are highly or moderately important for the majority of academics.

As these results show, while the leadership of the university may aspire to connect it more firmly to its locale, and be seen to be responding to local demands for support in tackling socio-economic problems, most academics see this activity as coming a very distant second to their core function as researchers and educators. Universities as institutions and their public, private and third sector partners also need to acknowledge what it is that motivates academics if they

are to successfully engage them in local and regional development. They must also recognise that the socio-economic impact of academic work may arise in an indirect manner and not necessarily focussed on the locality and as a result mechanisms both within the university and the city need to put in place to facilitate this, a leadership challenge to which we now turn.

THE LEADERSHIP CHALLENGE

The ongoing programme of OECD reviews of higher education in city and regional development have highlighted the leadership challenge of working across the boundary between universities and civil society. All too often city leaders do not understand the drivers behind higher education, particularly the tension between academic excellence and public engagement. For them the university can be a ‘black box’ with mysterious ways of working. Equally for many in the academy the drivers behind city development and the responsibilities of many public authorities are opaque. However common ground may emerge around the idea that the university and the public and private sectors can come together around ‘the leadership of place’. There is a growing body of academic literature on the role of leadership in shaping the integrated development of places – cities and neighbourhoods within cities. According to Gibney *et al.* (2009) this ‘new’ leadership of place is concerned with:

facilitating interdisciplinarity across institutional boundaries, technology themes, sub-territories and professional cultures in order to promote the development of innovation across the public and private sector domain ... [and] needs to ensure the comprehensive engagement of local communities so that they can both contribute to and fully benefit from the outcomes – thus avoiding the danger of ... creating deeper forms of social polarisation.

(Gibney *et al.*, 2009: 10)

Collinge and Gibney (2010) suggest that new complexities are being encountered by leaders working outside their own organisation:

leaders find themselves representing places rather than organisations; there are more uncertainties to be accommodated as outcomes are difficult to pin down and there are more unknowns; leaders are increasingly required to lead initiatives without formal power but with responsibility; they must accommodate the views of organisations, groups and communities historically excluded (consider for example, the engagement of social enterprises with the knowledge-based economy).

(Collinge and Gibney, 2010: 386).

Where do universities and their relationship to place fit into this picture? Hambleton has argued that ‘universities, provided they see themselves as ‘civic’ or ‘engaged’ universities, can make a significant contribution not just to the promotion of innovation (defined broadly) in their area, but also in assisting with the development of place-based leadership’ (Hambleton, 2009: 1). However, there are barriers in the way to universities realising this role. The rest of this section is adapted from a research project and scoping exercise for a proposed leadership development programme that would focus on improving partnership working between universities and cities. The research involved interviews with university and various civic leaders in the three cities - Bristol, Newcastle upon Tyne, and Sheffield (see Goddard *et al.*, 2010). The next two sub-sections describes the obstacles and challenges to boundary-spanning collaboration experienced by two groups – those faced by the universities in ‘reaching out’ to civic society, and those faced by civic society in ‘reaching in’ to universities. The third sub-section outlines some of the

findings and conclusions of this project as regards the role of leadership and best ways of developing this.

Obstacles and challenges faced by universities working with civil society

‘Civic partnership’ is often not seen as part of the universities’ ‘core business’, but only a means to other ends, and hence there are few people within universities whose main role and responsibilities are to support these relationships. Many of the activities that fall underneath the label civic partnerships are cross-subsidised from other funding sources, and therefore may not be financially sustainable in times of reduced resources. Coupled with many universities’ already stretched resources this places limits on the degree to which they can get involved in a range of external projects. Even where the university is involved in a range of ‘civic’ partnerships it is sometimes difficult know whether their activities are having an impact, particularly in the long-term.

Universities are not institutions located directly within the local political sphere, and are therefore unable to exert significant influence here. Furthermore the multitude of organisations that are involved in the political and economic governance of cities and regions in the UK creates challenges of understanding the ‘local political-organisational map’ and knowing who are the most important partners with which universities need to work. The way this varies across geographic and administrative boundaries can be a source of further complexity, while instability and changes in the leadership of local politics can make it hard for university leaders to build strong relationships with city councils.

The burdens of incentives and targets in the university system occupy gifted academics, meaning they do not have the spare time outside their main responsibilities to pursue other external engagement activities or interests. For some academics these systemic constraints will discourage them from taking risks by seeking to work across the boundaries of academia.

Obstacles and challenges faced by civic leaders working with universities

The university is not a homogeneous body: its size and diversity can make it hard for civic partners to get a single view from people there. Many civic partners do not know who to work with in the university below the executive level. This applies to academics, meaning that large potential sources of expertise remain untapped, but also to people in the administrative or support services, where the civic leaders may not always be clear of who is responsible in areas like finance or estates.

Many people outside universities do not understand their organisational structures and procedures well enough to be able to interact with them properly. In particular they may not be familiar with the terminology used by people within the university system to describe these structures and procedures: for instance, in a UK context, the differences between Vice-Chancellors, Deputy Vice-Chancellors, Pro Vice Chancellors, Deans etc. The language or jargon used by academics more generally can also be a barrier to their effective external engagement.

Civic partners sometimes find that universities work slowly in comparison to them and often do not have the same level of urgency in responding to opportunities or following up on agreements. Some feel that university procedures can also be overly-bureaucratic on occasions. External organisations in the private and third (voluntary) sectors may have a poor perception of universities as being unreliable, inefficient, or overly self-interested, and are therefore discouraged from working with them.

Alternatively, many external bodies may still perceive universities as solely inward-focused teaching and research organisations, and therefore are not aware of the opportunities working with them offers. Even when there is recognition of the ‘value added’ interaction with a university can bring, there may be a lack of demand or absorptive capacity for the knowledge that universities could supply. For instance, only a small proportion of SMEs would actually benefit from academic research outputs.

How to develop leadership that promotes civic partnership

It is possible to identify two relatively distinct forms of leadership that are required to overcome these obstacles. First, the internal leadership of large organisations (principally universities) so that they can become more externally engaged. Second, leadership within city partnerships that require the collaboration of multiple organisational stakeholders. These two forms of leadership have different challenges attached to them and require different approaches. University and non-university leaders have a role in promoting enterprising or boundary-crossing behaviour within their organisations by recognising the potential of outstanding individuals with the ability to make wider connections, and then supporting, protecting and valuing them. People with the

personal attributes and sense of purpose to assume a leading or mobilising role can emerge from levels further down the organisational hierarchy, but they may need to be supported by upper management and their endeavours aligned with the strategic priorities of the institution to have a full impact. Hence, Vice Chancellors, chief executives and other equivalent organisational leaders have a vital role in clearly setting out and promoting the civic agenda within their organisation. One Vice Chancellor described this in terms of ‘articulating that you’re interested where the city’s going [and] permeating that sense of availability and openness down the organisation’. This function of leadership is of particular importance in universities in helping to overcome the disconnect between strategic and operational levels. The creation of new positions dedicated to civic engagement is one option, but this may have limited impact if they are not linked to wider cultural or systemic change within the institutions. Efforts should rather focus on building the principal of valuing outreach or engagement or knowledge exchange activities into core university structures like promotion pathways or workload models. However, these external engagement activities should not be compulsory for all academics, as when a person unsuited to this type of role is pushed into a leadership position it is more likely to have a damaging effect on the institution’s external relationships and reputation.

Turning to inter-organisational partnerships these are distinguished by people being as committed to the mutual benefits it will bring to the city as they are to the interests of their own organisation. These civic partnerships should be relatively independent of the transactional relationships that exist between organisations, (for instance between city councils and universities on estate matters), so that tensions or disagreements that inevitably arise on these fronts do not spill over to negatively affect overall relationships and be detrimental to the city as a whole. This should, therefore, allow leadership of these partnerships to focus on the joint benefits they can bring to their city through real change, instead of preserving the status quo relationships and ‘not falling out’. As with leadership within organisations, good civic

leadership, whether from the city council or other possible spheres, requires being able to effectively articulate the future direction of the city's development. A process of agreeing and clearly setting out this vision in strategic plan documents, so that all stakeholders are aligned behind the partnership, can see their role, and will be committed to delivering is required. This also indicates the mutual responsibility and trust that these civic relationships entail: if individual or group leaders fail to deliver themselves, it can destroy confidence and trust within the wider partnership. The form of collaborative or distributed leadership that characterises good civic partnerships does not just involve key individuals, but also works through intermediary partnership organisations. Because these organisations normally have only very limited resources themselves, their style of leadership must necessarily be facilitative and understated, concentrating on mobilising and aligning key public and private organisations within their city to achieve their goals.

The analysis above points to the need for developing leaders from the city and its universities to enhance their skills in working together on key challenges facing the city – to lead the city not just to lead in the city. To kick start this process leaders from the university and the city need to come together and identify a key challenge such as removing barriers to social mobility or developing a sustainable city and then hand over to an operational group of future leaders from the university and the city. A key task for the university would be to mobilise its global knowledge around the chosen theme and translate this so that it has meaning for the city. Such intellectual leadership should embrace the political, managerial and community dimensions of civic leadership. Leadership development would involve building networks between key actors, locally, nationally and internationally, and developing skills in partnership working through joint projects and benchmarking against best practise elsewhere.

Leadership development programmes with their emphasis on the interpersonal skills of individuals are a necessary but not sufficient condition for creating the civic university. Formal structures within organisations and regulatory regimes can be barriers that even enterprising individuals cannot circumnavigate. Within Europe there is much discussion of the need to ‘modernise’ the management and governance of universities to meet the ‘Grand Challenges’ facing the European Union (e.g. The Lund Declaration, 2009). Achieving major structural changes in universities is much easier when there is some external shock to the higher education system in the form of a major change in government policy towards the sector and/or institutional mergers lubricated by substantial additional funding. A recent example of this has been the reform of the Finnish higher education system introduced in 2010. This amongst other things facilitated the merger of three Helsinki universities – the Universities of Technology and Art and Design and the Helsinki Business School to form the Alto University. This new institution has objectives and values which clearly fit many of our criteria for a civic university:

[To be a] world class university combining science and art, technology, business and industrial design to stimulate innovations ... [and to] educate responsible and broad-minded experts with wide perspective to act as future visionaries in the society. ... [An institution with the values of] passion to explore boundaries; freedom to be creative and critical; courage to influence and excel; duty to care, accept and inspire; high ethics, openness and equality.

(Pursula, 2010).

CONCLUSION

Universities are quintessentially urban institutions. According to the Carnegie foundation 46% of US universities are to be found in large or mid-sized cities (see Moore *et al.*, 2010: 5). The world's leading city regions account for the lion's share of academic publications and citations (Matthiessen *et al.*, 2010). In terms of spatial organisation cities are often claimed to be national and international hubs in the knowledge economy. Citing the analysis by Matthiessen *et al.* (2010) the prestigious scientific journal Nature asks the question 'why do so many scientists ignore the needs of our cities? ... Researchers who benefit from opportunities in cities should ask what they can give back.' (Nature, 2010: 883-884). This suggests that there are deep rooted forces that result in a disconnection between universities and the cities where they are located such that the presence of a university is *not* a guarantee of local economic success or a vibrant and inclusive urban community. Mobilising universities in support of city development in the round therefore needs robust partnerships between universities and local civil society. And achieving this needs effective and distributed leadership on both sides. While some universities and city authorities are devoting resources to enhancing *internal* leadership the challenge now is to develop capacity in leadership across the boundaries between organisations. The role of universities in the 'leadership of place' can provide a powerful focus for such people development programmes.

We have suggested here that promoting the 'Civic University' as a model can contribute to breaking down the barriers between universities and cities. Such universities should not be confined to working with their immediate city but rather use the 'local' as a crucible in which to forge a more open institution able to address multi-scalar challenges like sustainable development. Such institutions would not only mobilise their research around grand challenges

but also organise their teaching with a view to producing future citizens whose decisions as consumers, workers or entrepreneurs will bring about societal innovation in the broader public interest. In doing this, the civic university could be regarded as a social innovator, behaving as a multi-level actor linking the global, local and national domains; working across the silos of the disciplines and of the private and public sectors and linking with both business and the community; developing the boundary spanning and social entrepreneurship skills of the professionals it trains and testing its research in local 'living labs'.

Acknowledgment

The last section of the chapter draws on a study sponsored by the Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE) undertaken by two of the authors together with Lynne Howlett of Newcastle University and Tom Kennie of the Leadership Foundation for Higher Education and their contribution is gratefully acknowledged

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